

A Killing in Choctaw The Power of Forgiveness

Written by Westside ID267

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□ Carl Ray

In 1999, San Jose, Calif. educator, activist and former stand-up comic Carl Ray began to tell the compelling story of witnessing his father's 1962 murder. He shared his story with thousands in the form of a one-man, single act play titled "A Killing in Choctaw." Ray relived that painful day nearly 100 times performing in theaters, museums, churches and colleges throughout the United States. Upon seeing one of Ray's performances, award-winning filmmaker Chike C. Nowffiah eagerly agreed to collaborate with Ray on filming a documentary. On September 19, 2004 "A Killing in Choctaw: the Power of Forgiveness" premiered to a packed house at the Montgomery Theater in San Jose.

The New York Times reporter Carol Pogash was in the audience full of tearfully overwhelmed movie viewers, and was compelled to write a poignant article (below) that appeared October 20, 2004 in The New York Times 'Movies' section.

The New York Times*

Haunted by His Father's Murder at the Hands of a Racist

By CAROL POGASH

Published: October 20, 2004

Amelia Ray was 22 when she sat in a darkened theater, watching her father, Carl Ray, perform his autobiographical one-man show, "A Killing in Choctaw." Only then did she discover that he had witnessed the murder of his father decades before, killed because Carl had refused to say "sir" to a white man.

After a scene in which Mr. Ray begs his dead father to rise and see him go to college, a friend who was at the theater that night in 1999 leaned over and whispered: "Did you know about this?" Ms. Ray shook her head no. She didn't even think it was odd, she explained recently in an interview. "I guess I'd grown accustomed to the silence."*

Click here to read "The New York Times" article in its entirety: www.nytimes.com/2004/10/20/movies/20kill.html?oref=login&pagewanted=all

About Carl Ray:

In 1967, Carl Ray graduated from Tuskegee Institute with a BS Degree in Electrical Engineering. After graduation, he traveled to California to begin a career in the Aerospace Industry. Early in his career, he was sidetracked by a yearning to perform stand-up comedy.

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in 1968 Carl Ray started a Youth Opportunity Program in East Palo Alto, Calif.; In 1970 he began recruiting youth to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); then he undertook sponsoring tours to the colleges. Ray continues to host Spring and Fall tours to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. To date, he has chaperoned more than 2,000 high school students on HBCU tours.

In 1988, Ray, together with his wife Brenda, founded Courtland Esteem School, a private school in San Jose, California where they continue to educate young African American children in grades one through six.

To learn more about Ray's fascinating biography, please visit www.carlraye.com

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